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Middle East, Africa, South Asia

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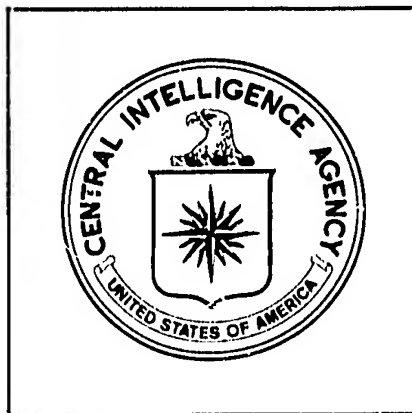
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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA - SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Libya


A. More Moderate Qadhafi?

Recent reports that President Qadhafi is displaying a new maturity have aroused Egyptian President Sadat's interest and could smooth the way for a reunion of the two leaders.

Qadhafi apparently made a very favorable impression on Ghassan Tueni, the respected and well-connected publisher of Beirut's leading newspaper An-Nahar. Tueni was especially taken by Qadhafi's relaxed and moderate responses during a 90-minute interview conducted in early January and published last week. Tueni, for instance, purposely gave Qadhafi several opportunities to lash out at Sadat, but--to his surprise--Qadhafi did not respond to the leads.

Tueni recently relayed his impression of a "sounder" Qadhafi to Sadat, who apparently was very curious about the new moderation in his neighbor's behavior. Sadat told Tueni that several other individuals whose opinions he respected had gained similar impressions of the Libyan leader. Sadat cited a recent remark by the Sudanese interior minister that Qadhafi is now showing signs of "statesmanship."

Other Arab notables in regular contact with Sadat have probably also given him favorable impressions of Qadhafi. Ashraf Marwan--Sad



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Despite the positive experiences of others, Sadat is probably still skeptical. For Sadat, dealing with his young neighbor can spark strong emotions and quickly drain his patience.

The Egyptians, however, are anxious to regain at least the option of turning to Tripoli for money and arms--especially Libya's growing inventory of Soviet weapons. Egyptian officials recognize that despite their successes in dealing with Qadhafi's subordinates, the Libyan leader is still the key to a cooperative relationship. Sadat, moreover, may feel that regardless of whether Qadhafi has truly moderated his views, the Libyan leader is now in no position to use his usual high-handed tactics. Qadhafi, anxious to end his isolation in the Arab world, is pushing hard to arrange a summit meeting with the Egyptian president. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Kenya

Parliament Reconvenes but Future in Doubt

Kenya's parliament, dismissed last November by an angered President Kenyatta because backbenchers insisted on one of their own for deputy speaker, reconvened on February 4. The session has so far been uneventful, suggesting that Kenyatta and the backbenchers may have been reconciled at least temporarily. If Kenyatta's critics in parliament push him too hard, however, the aged president might send parliament home for good.

Kenyatta is reported to have accepted with considerable reluctance the backbencher's candidate for deputy speaker, J. M. Seroney. Seroney was probably supported by Vice President Moi. The two had been rivals for leadership of the Kalenjin tribal group, but apparently they patched up their differences.

Even with the selection of the deputy speaker apparently resolved, the future of parliament may be imperiled by the reported intention of some backbenchers to mount a vigorous campaign against government proposals. Some backbenchers are preparing to denounce corruption and large land acquisitions by top government figures. Such a move is almost certain to provoke Kenyatta

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Pakistan

Main Opposition Party Banned

Prime Minister Bhutto's government has formally outlawed the National Awami Party (NAP), Pakistan's leading opposition party, after arresting party leader Wali Khan and dozens of his supporters over the weekend. These moves followed the bombing incident Saturday that killed the home minister of the Northwest Frontier Province, Hayat Mohammad Sherpao. Sherpao was Bhutto's chief political lieutenant in the frontier province and the de facto leader of the provincial government.

So far, apparently no one has been formally charged in Sherpao's murder, but the new crackdown on the NAP indicates that Bhutto intends to blame the party and its supporters in neighboring Afghanistan. Pakistani government-controlled media already are hinting that the NAP and the Afghans were responsible. In recent months, Islamabad has accused the party and the Afghan government of being behind a number of bombing incidents in the frontier province and elsewhere in Pakistan, but both the NAP and the Afghans have denied these allegations. Some observers in Pakistan have suggested that young pro-NAP extremists, including students, may have carried out the bombings in disregard of the party leaders' wishes. The evidence suggests student militants may have been involved in Sherpao's death; he was killed inside a university in Peshawar, the capital of the frontier province.

The incident will further embitter Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan. The Afghan government has long sympathized with the NAP's efforts to win greater autonomy for Pakistan's two frontier provinces, Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier, where the party's strength is concentrated. The people of these provinces are ethnically more closely related to the Afghans than the Pakistanis. Afghanistan propagandizes on the NAP's behalf, provides sanctuary to a prominent NAP leader, and may be giving the party some material support. It has been accused by Islamabad of training pro-NAP extremists. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Sri Lanka

By-election Underscores Tamil Grievances

A sweeping by-election victory last week by S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, a Tamil community leader, refocused attention on long-festering Tamil dissatisfaction with the government.

Although Chelvanayakam--the undisputed leader of organized Tamil political groups and long the symbol of Tamil aspirations--was expected to win, the government mounted an active campaign on behalf of its candidate. Most Tamils apparently identified with Chelvanayakam's demand for a separate Tamil state to overcome what they view as economic and social inequities practiced by the Sinhalese majority. Sensing the frustration among his people, Chelvanayakam recently adopted this more activist line, abandoning his former position which merely called for equal rights for Tamils.

The Tamils, who are concentrated in northern Sri Lanka and comprise over 20 percent of the population, could become an explosive problem for Prime Minister Bandaranaike, especially as the country's economic woes continue. The Tamils are quick to charge the government with discrimination, particularly in job and educational opportunities. Given these conditions, relative moderates like Chelvanayakam will continue to be under pressure from increasingly impatient and militant Tamil youth who view the political process as irrelevant to the separatist movement. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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